

# UNEARTH THE MYSTERIES



WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE  
AND WHAT ARE THEY  
DOING?

**Begin to unearth the  
mystery of the people who  
work in your clinic!**

**Know the roles of the staff  
and how working as a team  
makes your clinic bloom with  
good customer service.**

## **In this Section:**

- ❖ Providing quality WIC services
- ❖ What are WIC roles?
- ❖ Identify the staff roles in your clinic
- ❖ Overview of a certification appointment
- ❖ Taking a closer look at the certification process
  - ❖ Why does WIC do a certification?
  - ❖ How is income eligibility determined?
  - ❖ How are medical risks determined?
  - ❖ How are nutrition risks determined?
  - ❖ Why are WIC referrals so important?
  - ❖ What does breastfeeding promotion do for my clinic?
  - ❖ When & how are checks provided?
  - ❖ Worksheet: Beyond the Garden Gate



# Who are the People in Your Neighborhood?

## Providing Quality WIC Services

Quality WIC Services require many roles to work together. Just like in a community garden each person's contributions are important to the final result! By spending time looking at the roles in your clinic you will see for yourself how each contributes toward providing exceptional service to our clients.

Within your clinic you will meet many people who have different roles and responsibilities. You may also find that some staff members may have more than one role, giving your clinic a garden of resources!

IN YOUR CLINIC YOU WILL FIND MANY LEVELS OF SUPPORT AND AREAS OF EXPERTISE!

### What are WIC Roles?

There are many roles in WIC. Some clinics use different terms to describe the same role.

**Ask your co-workers if they use these common titles or different titles.**

- ❖ Certifier or Competent Professional Authority (CPA)
- ❖ Clerk
- ❖ Nutritionist (RD)
- ❖ Breastfeeding Specialist
- ❖ BF Promotion Coordinator
- ❖ MSS Provider
- ❖ Coordinator and/or Clinic Lead





**The Staff in My Clinic are:**

**Certifiers:**

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**Clerks:**

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**Registered Dietitians:**

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**BF Promotion Coordinator:**

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**Coordinator:**

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**MSS Staff:**

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**Certifier / Competent Professional Authority (CPA)**

The CPA determines nutrition risk eligibility and prescribes an appropriate food package for each client. The CPA must be a qualified health professional or a person who has completed the minimum paraprofessional competencies and is certified as a paraprofessional.

**Clerk**

The clerk greets the public and makes appointments for WIC services. The clerk also issues checks for certified WIC clients and maintains good clinic flow for clients and staff.

**Nutritionist or Registered Dietitian (RD).**

The RD assures the quality of nutrition services including nutrition education and counsels high risk clients and writes their care plans.

**Breastfeeding Promotion Coordinator**

The BF Promotion Coordinator provides leadership in her agency on breastfeeding promotion.

**Coordinator or Clinic Lead**

The Clinic Coordinator is responsible for the WIC budget and staffing issues. They may or may not provide direct WIC client services.

**MSS Provider (Maternity Support Service Provider)**

The MSS Provider gives additional services to qualifying WIC clients. Maternity Support Services is not a part of WIC but provides quality services for which the client's Medicaid will be billed.

Complete the column on the left and bring it with you to training!



# How WIC Services Are Provided Is Not A Mystery!

## Overview of a WIC Certification Appointment

Approximate time for first WIC Appointment is 30-45 minutes.

- ❖ Client checks in at front desk.
- ❖ Client reads the Rights and Responsibilities and then signs this form. Your clinic may have other required forms.
- ❖ Staff obtains personal data, checks ID, and documents income.
- ❖ Staff takes anthropometric measures (heights & weights), and does a hemoglobin.
- ❖ Staff asks standardized assessment questions that include health and diet questions.
- ❖ Certifier interprets data and informs client of eligibility status.
- ❖ Staff provides client with nutrition education based on risks identified.
- ❖ Staff offers Voter Registration.
- ❖ Staff refers client to appropriate services.
- ❖ Certifier prescribes food package.
- ❖ Staff provides WIC checks, appointment folder, and educates clients on check cashing procedures.
- ❖ Staff schedules the next WIC appointment.
- ❖ Staff set up a care plan on the Flowsheet.
- ❖ Client leaves with checks for food.



## Taking a Closer Look at the Certification Process



### Look at the exciting things you'll learn at training!

- ❖ Obtaining accurate anthropometric & hemoglobin data using nationwide standards!
- ❖ Counseling ideas that educate and motivate clients about nutrition!
- ❖ Using the computer ergonomically and efficiently during client interviews!
- ❖ How to ask medical and nutrition related questions to get the most accurate responses.

### Why Does WIC do a Certification?

Each WIC applicant must be certified as eligible to receive WIC foods and services based on Federal and State guidelines. The Certifier or CPA is the staff person who "certifies" that the client meets all four eligibility requirements (geographical, income, categorical and nutritional). The certifier is also responsible for telling the client why they are eligible and for how long. The previous page shows all the steps for a certification appointment. In this section we will be taking a closer look at those steps!



### How is Income Eligibility Determined?

Before an appointment is made, WIC staff asks about the household size and income to make sure the client meets the Federal income guidelines. Clients who have an income of 185% or less of the federal poverty level will qualify for a WIC appointment. If the client's income is over 185% of the poverty level there may be other programs that qualify a client as income eligible i.e. Medicaid, Basic Food or TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families). Staff must note that they have seen proof of income or participation in designated programs before they are assessed for a nutrition risk.

**Remember that income is a starting point to qualify for WIC. Clients also must have a nutrition risk to participate in the WIC program.**



**Read the Risk Chapter in the Policy  
& Procedure Manual- Vol.1  
Chapter 14**

**How are risks  
determined?**

WIC is a preventative health program that uses measurements, hemoglobin information and a health history to screen for nutrition or other health problems.

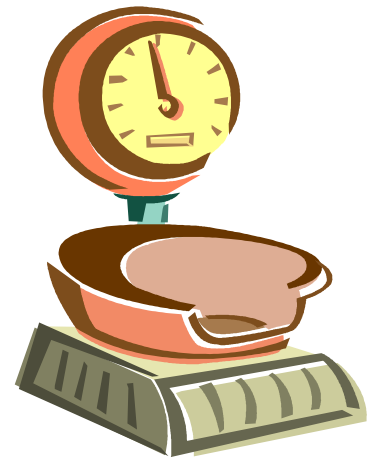
Many of the Medical Risk factors for WIC are based on height, weight and hemoglobin information. The appropriate counseling that goes along with this risk determination is one of the many reasons that WIC works! For example, if a client's hemoglobin is low, WIC staff may share information with the client about good dietary sources of iron (even sources beyond spinach and liver!), how WIC foods will help, and ways to include these foods in their diet.

A set of category specific assessment questions is also used to collect information about other possible Medical & Dietary Risks.

**Washington State's  
Assessment Questions**

Washington State has its own set of standardized assessment questions. These questions have been determined to be an effective way to gather information from the client.

Staff use the Assessment Questions to complete a thorough assessment of the clients health and nutrition status.



WIC staff provides appropriate nutrition counseling based on the **Nutritional &/or Medical Risk** of the client.



## What Else Happens at a Certification Appointment?



Ask the staff in your clinic about getting your own list of referrals available to families in your area.

Providing referrals is the next step in the certification process. Referrals to other state and local programs are provided to all WIC clients.

### Why are referrals so important?

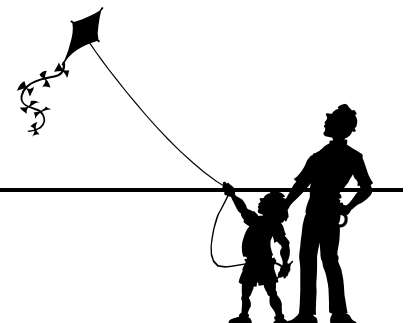
WIC families often have needs beyond what WIC can provide. This gap is bridged by caring staff who help families get information about other helpful programs.

WIC has four main referrals:

- ❖ **TANF** (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
- ❖ **Basic Food Program**
- ❖ **Medicaid** (Medical coupons)
- ❖ **Child Support Enforcement**

In addition to mandated referrals, WIC helps families' access programs for:

- ❖ Immunizations
- ❖ Food banks
- ❖ Family planning
- ❖ Maternity Support Services (MSS)
- ❖ Clothing banks
- ❖ Parenting classes
- ❖ Teen pregnancy programs
- ❖ Dentists
- ❖ Doctors
- ❖ Breastfeeding support
- ❖ And many others





# Every Staff Person Has An Important Role In Promoting Breastfeeding

In a National study, WIC moms who received information about breastfeeding from WIC are more likely to breastfeed, especially those moms who did not get any breastfeeding advice from their physicians.



Breastfeeding Promotion is an important part of WIC in Washington and the United States! WIC serves a high risk, low-income population whose breastfeeding incidence and duration has historically been less than the general population. Because WIC serves 35-40 percent of all pregnant women in Washington, the program has the potential to improve breastfeeding success in these high-risk women.

Breastfeeding benefits moms and babies, but it also benefits communities, the country and even the world! Take a look at these benefits!

- ❖ Mothers who breastfeed have less incidence of ovarian cancer & premenopausal breast cancer.
- ❖ Breastfed premies show higher IQ's at 7 ½ -8 years of age.
- ❖ Breastfeeding reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death (SIDS).

**WIC joins with the American Academy of Pediatrics to recommend breastfeeding for baby's first year of life.**



## What does Breastfeeding Promotion do for my clinic?

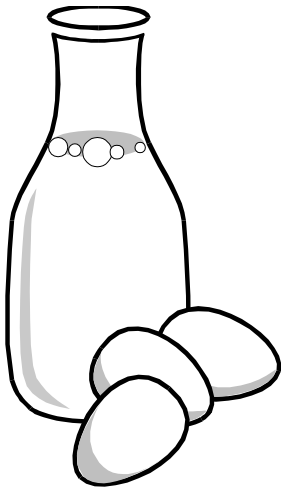
By promoting breastfeeding, clients will see your clinic as a good source of health information.

**You make a difference!**

It is overwhelmingly clear the health benefits for mothers and babies provided by breastfeeding last a lifetime!



## When & How are WIC Checks Provided to Eligible Clients?



**Check education is important to clients, staff & retailers!**

WIC check education is given to all clients before they leave the certification appointment. How to shop, what foods to select and how to cash the checks at the checkout counter are vital pieces of information to make WIC shopping trips a good experience for all involved!

WIC Checks are printed for the client at the end of the Certification appointment if the client has been determined to be WIC Eligible.

The CPA is responsible for discussing the food prescription with the client and selecting an appropriate food package. Choosing the correct food package is an important part of the CPA's job. For example, if a woman tells the CPA that drinking a lot of milk causes her discomfort, the CPA might work with the client to select a food package that offers a milk substitute, like soy beverage or tofu.

**Some additional information about WIC Checks:**

- ❖ Checks are printed at the touch of a button.
- ❖ Clients have 30 days to cash their WIC checks.
- ❖ Most clients receive bi-monthly checks or tri-monthly checks as a convenience to them and to ease clinic schedules.

**Before coming to training read in the Policy and Procedure Manual - Vol. 1:**

- ❖ **WIC Checks- Chapter 22**
- ❖ **Food Packages - Chapter 23**



# Unearthing the Mysteries Beyond the Garden Gate



**To be better prepared for discussions and activities during training, here are some activities you can do! Information from this section will be discussed further during training.**

1. Bring with you to training:
  - ❖ A list of the staff in your clinic and their roles or complete the information on page 3 of this section.
  - ❖ Read the Risk Factor & WIC Foods chapters of the Policy and Procedure manual - Vol. 1 Chapters 14, 22, & 23

2. Observe certifications. Focus on the following key pieces of a certification & record your observations. See page 4 of the Breaking New Ground section.

- ❖ Read the Rights and Responsibilities for yourself - sit in the clinic and read them in the environment clients are reading them in! Record any observation(s).

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- ❖ What other forms (if any) does your clinic have clients sign? When do they get signed and where are they filed? List them here.

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- ❖ Who does the anthropometric measurements and iron testing in your clinic?

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- ❖ What questions do you have about the assessment process?

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- ❖ What were some of the most common referrals made?

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- ❖ If the client was pregnant, what was the most common information given to her about breastfeeding

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What ideas did you gather from your clinic regarding Breastfeeding Promotion?

- ❖ Include notes about clinic decorations, classes, incentives, staff awareness or other ideas:

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- ❖ Who do you refer client questions to in your clinic concerning breastfeeding? Include this information here:

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.  
**Washington State WIC Nutrition Program does not discriminate.**

For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats.  
To submit a request, please call 1-800-841-1410 (TDD/TTY 1-800-833-6388).

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CORE WIC Training Notebook



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